RAMADAN- AL- MUBARAK

A season to achieve piety (TAQWA)

COMPILED BY

Hazrat Haji Shakeel Ahmad Sahab (D.B.)

Mujaz-e- Bai'at,Hazrat Mufti Muhammad Haneef Sahab (R.A.)

RAMADAN- AL- MUBARAK

A season to achieve

Hardships turn into ease
Forgiveness from sins
Less effort more gain
Luxury of the paradise

Provision from unknown sources
facilitation in all tasks
protection from deception
And much more

By
Hazrat Haji Shakeel Ahmad sahib (mz)
Mujaz e bai'at Arif billah Hazrat Mufti Muhammad Haneef Sahib (RA)

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بِسۡمِ اللّٰہِ الرَّحۡمٰنِ الرَّحِیۡمِ

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REVIEW

بِسۡمِ اللّٰہِ الرَّحۡمٰنِ الرَّحِیۡمِ

Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Zaid Sahib Mazaahiri,
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Taqwa (piety) means to fear and to protect oneself, that is, to fear God and to protect oneself from unlawful desires and all types of sins. This is called piety. Almighty Allah says:

وَاَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهٖ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوٰى۔ فَاِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِىَ الْمَاْوٰى۔

Translation: 'Whoever feared God with the thought that he is answerable (on the Day of Judgment), and (due to this fear) abstained from unlawful desires, would find his abode in the Paradise.'

Piety is such an attribute that, in many a place in the Holy Qur'an, we have been enjoined to acquire it. Almighty Allah says

يٰاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اتَّقُوا الله

Translation:" O believers! Fear Allah."
(Meaning adopt piety (Taqwa).)

Almighty Allah, after describing the vastness of the Paradise, at the end says:

اُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ۔

Translation: "this Paradise has been readied for the sake of pious people."

Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ilyas Ahmad Sahib (RA) says:' Taqwa (piety) is the name of protecting oneself from carnal desires.'

The best season to achieve piety is the month of Ramadan ul Mubarak. The very reason behind making the fasts fard (an imperative duty) is for us to achieve piety. After describing the imperative nature of the Ramadan fasts, Almighty Allah says:

لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُوْنَ

Translation: "so that you become God fearing."

This indicates that the month of Ramadan is one during which it is easier to achieve piety, and this in fact is the real benefit of this sacred month. If someone could not manage to acquire piety in this month then it will be difficult for him to acquire it in other times. The one who acquires piety in this month, will, Allah willing, remain pious during the remaining 11 months. A pious person becomes the favourite of Almighty Allah, and becomes deserving of the Paradise.

What is piety (taqwa) what are the activities one has to do in the month of Ramadan to gain piety? What are activities he has to shun? How can this noble attribute (of piety) be achieved in this month? This and other such questions on this topic are dealt in detail in this booklet in a comprehensive and very impressive manner. Alhaaj Shakeel Ahmad Sahib (db)[successor to Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Haneef Sahib (RA)], has derived from authentic books and benefited from the company of renowned scholars in compiling this book in an easily comprehensible manner.

May Almighty Allah, by His grace, accept this booklet, and bless me too with the noble attribute of piety.

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Teacher of Hadeeth,
Darul ul Uloom Nadwat ul Ulama,
Lucknow.
30, June, 2014.
(1st Ramadan ul Mubarak, 1435 Hijri).

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بِسۡمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحۡمٰنِ الرَّحِيۡمِ

نَحۡمَدُهٗ وَنُصَلِّيۡ عَلٰى رَسُوۡلِهِ الۡكَرِيۡمِ ۔ اَمَّا بَعۡدُ

Almighty Allah has commanded in many a place in the Holy Qur'an for us to achieve Taqwa (piety). It is essential to gain piety to become the favourite of Almighty Allah. Without piety it is not possible to gain proximity to Almighty Allah. Almighty Allah says:

اِنۡ اَوۡلِيَآؤُهٗۤ اِلَّا الۡمُتَّقُوۡنَ

Translation:"Almighty Allah makes only the pious ones His friends."

In the Holy Qur'an, Almighty Allah, while describing the Paradise says:

اُعِدَّتۡ لِلۡمُتَّقِيۡنَ

Translation:" the Paradise has been created for the sake of the pious."

It is narrated by Hazrat Abu Dhar Ghifaari (RAA) that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) said:" I know of a verse which, if acted upon by someone, is sufficient for him in this world and the Hereafter." That verse is:

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ حَقَّ تُقٰتِهٖ

Translation:" O believers! Fear Allah, as He should be feared."

The servant of Allah can not gain His (swt) proximity so fast through any act of worship as he can do with piety.

It is established through the Qur'an and Hadeeth that it is piety alone which benefits a believer more than anything else. It is piety alone which guarantees the acceptance of the acts of worship. It is piety alone which is the source of prosperity in this world and the Hereafter.

Through piety, one gains proximity to Almighty Allah, abundance of provisions, ease in all the tasks, escape from difficulties, protection from deception, pleasant life, respect and reverence, saintliness, forgiveness from sins, deliverance from the Hellfire, help and succor from Allah, dominance over the fellow

creatures, and innumerable other benefits of both the worlds.

The importance of piety can be gauged from the fact that Almighty Allah has not prescribed any particular month or season to achieve perfection in any act of worship, but for attaining piety He has bestowed upon us the month of Ramadan. Almighty Allah has made it easier to acquire piety in this month by causing to weaken the activities of Satan and the ego (nafs).

It is commanded in the Holy Qur'an:" O believers! Acquire piety as it should be acquired.'

Almighty Allah desires that in the matter of gaining piety each one of us should try to surpass the other. Therefore, we have been urged in the Holy Qur'an to be ahead of others in attaining piety. We have been taught a supplication to this end.

Translation: "O Allah! Please make me the leader among the pious."

Ramadan ul Mubarak, which is the season for acquiring piety, is available to us every year, but it is generally seen that we are very negligent in benefiting from it. We spend most of our valuable time in the preparation for Iftaar (breaking of fast), making purchases for Eid, and other such unnecessary activities. During this month, we are content with the drop in vice, which is an automatic outcome of the chaining of rebellious satans and the half-dead ego (nafs) resulting from the fasts and the night prayers (taraweeh). We do not strive to abandon all the sins and vices by fighting our psyche (nafs). This attitude of ours results in bringing no change in our lives despite fasting and praying.

This book-let has been brought out keeping this need in mind. May Almighty Allah bestow its benefits on one and all, so that the month of Ramadan becomes a source of acquiring total piety for all of us? Ameen

Wassalam,
Shakeel Ahmad,
Panvel, Mumbai.

بِسۡمِ اللّٰہِ الرَّحۡمٰنِ الرَّحِیۡمِ

WHAT IS RAMADAN?

Ramadan ul Mubarak is the most sacred and auspicious month among all the months of the year. Almighty Allah says:

شَہۡرُ رَمَضَانَ الَّذِیۡۤ اُنۡزِلَ فِیۡہِ الۡقُرۡاٰنُ

The book, which is the source of eternal guidance for the humankind, was caused to descend from the Preserved Tablet (Louh e Mahfooz), to the lowest heaven in this auspicious month. Further, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) said that Ramadan ul Mubarak is the month of Almighty Allah. Though all the months belong to Almighty Allah, but because of its sacredness and auspiciousness, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) has linked Ramadan's name with Almighty Allah.

Almighty Allah's special refulgence and grace descend in this month, which is not the case in other months. Almighty Allah has made fasting in this month an imperative duty (fard), and the night prayers (taraweeh) a Sunnah act. (extract from 'Fazaail e Aamaal).

The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said:" Almighty Allah says that every act of worship of a man is for his own sake except fasting, which is purely for my sake, and I alone will give reward for it. Fasts are a shield. Whoever among you fasts, should abstain from obscene and abusive talk. If some body uses abusive and obscene language you must tell him that you are fasting. And I swear by God, in whose possession is my life that the bad odour emanating from the mouth of a fasting man is dearer to Almighty Allah than the sweet smell of musk. There are two moments of happiness for a fasting man: first at

the time of breaking his fast (iftaar), and the second on meeting Almighty Allah, when he gets reward for his fasting."

Hazrat Umama Bahili (RAA) narrates that he asked the Holy Prophet (pbuh): 'O Messenger of Allah (pbuh)! Please show me an act of worship which would take me to the Paradise.' The Holy Prophet (pbuh) replied: "make fasting compulsory on you, because there is nothing like fasting that would benefit both in this world and the Hereafter."

The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said:" For the sake of Allah when a man fasts for a day, (as a reward for this one day fast) Almighty Allah causes him to move away from the Hell to a distance of 70 years' travel."

In another Hadeeth it is narrated that the fast is a shield (from the Hellfire). (Bukhari and Muslim).

WHY RAMADAN IS BESTOWED BY ALLAH ON US

Almighty Allah has bestowed on us the month of Ramadan for us to acquire piety. Almighty Allah says:

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُوْنَ

Translation:"O believers! Fasting has been made obligatory upon you as it was made obligatory upon the earlier nations, so that you become pious." (Ma'arif ul Qur'an).

The very purpose behind awarding of this month is for us to become pious, and as a result, acquire all the benefits of this world and the Hereafter.

WHAT IS PIETY?

1. Imam Nuawi (RA) says that piety is to do what has been ordained by Almighty Allah, and to abstain from what has been forbidden, so that man is saved of the wrath and displeasure of Almighty Allah and His punishment.

2. Hazrat Imam Ghazali (RA) says:'O dear! You must

know that piety is a rare treasure. If you succeed in finding this treasure you will get valuable pearls and jewels, and a priceless collection of spiritual knowledge. You will get subsistence from Almighty Allah, and will achieve great success, and will become the occupant of Paradise. In other words, all the good things of this world and the Hereafter have been stored in piety. (Ahya ul Uloom).

3. Imam Suyuti (RA) says that piety is to follow the Commandments of Almighty Allah and to refrain from the forbidden things. Allama Wafdi (RA) writes that piety is to adorn one's inner self for the sake of his Creator as beautifully as one adorns his outer looks for the sake of his fellow creatures. (Tafseer e Kabeer)

Certain righteous elders have said that piety is to abandon treading the path of one's desires for the sake of love for Almighty Allah. In other words, the things which displease Almighty Allah should be abandoned despite one feeling the urge to do them, in order to please Almighty Allah. This is piety.

An illustration should make the concept of piety more clear. It is narrated that once Hazrat Umar (RAA) asked Hazrat Uby bin Ka'ab (RAA) as to what piety was? In order to explain it to Hazrat Umar (RAA), Hazrat Uby bin Ka'ab asked him whether he (Hazrat Umar) ever treaded a narrow path lined up with thorny bushes. Hazrat Umar (RAA) said:' yes I have passed through such a path.' Hazrat Uby bin Ka'ab (RAA) asked him:' what did you do while going through such a path?' Hazrat Umar (RAA) said: 'I gathered my garments and walked very carefully to avoid any thorn pricking my clothes or the body.' Hazrat Uby bin ka'ab said:' that is taqwa (piety).' In other words, the world is full of thorns of vices and disregard of Almighty Allah, in such a situation walking on the path of

Shari'ah in such a way that none of Almighty Allah's Commandments is disobeyed, is piety.

While explaining total piety (kaamil taqwa), scholars have described different taqwa for each part of the body, which, briefly, are as follows:

Taqwa of the tongue: one should not utter anything which would displease Almighty Allah.

Taqwa of the heart: This means one should not have jealousy toward anybody. In the same way one's heart should not nurture conceit, animosity, enmity, malice, revenge and other such ailments of heart.

Taqwa of the eye: This is to abstain from looking at anything that is unlawful /forbidden.

Taqwa of the stomach: This means not to let anything unlawful or even suspicious to enter the stomach.

Taqwa of the hands: This is prevent our hands from touching anything unlawful/ forbidden. .

Taqwa of the feet: not to step towards anything that would amount to recalcitrance and disobedience of Almighty Allah.

Taqwa of worship: all acts of worship should be purely for the sake of Almighty Allah, and nothing worldly should be the object of one's worship

Almighty Allah says:

يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوْا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِىْ خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُوْنَ۔

Translation: "O people! Worship your Lord who created you and those earlier to you, so that you achieve piety."

Almighty Allah says in the Holy Qur'an that the purpose behind animal sacrifice, Hajj, fasting and all forms of worship is to achieve piety. Regarding animal sacrifice, Almighty Allah says:

لَنْ يَّنَالَ اللّٰهَ لُحُوْمُهَا وَلَا دِمَآؤُهَا وَلٰكِنْ يَّنَالُهُ التَّقْوٰى مِنْكُمْ

Translation:"Neither the flesh nor the blood of the sacrificed animal reaches Almighty Allah. But the Taqwa of the person

offering sacrifice reaches Almighty Allah."

Similarly, regarding Hajj, the great act of worship, Almighty Allah says: وَمَنْ يُّعَظِّمْ شَعَائِرَ اللهِ فَاِنَّهَا مِنْ تَقْوَى الْقُلُوْبِ۔

Translation:" those with piety alone show reverence to the commandments of Hajj."

In this way, it is established that the purpose behind every act of worship is to acquire piety.

PIETY IN THE LIGHT OF QUR'AN

The phrase 'Libaas e Taqwa' (apparel of piety) has been used in the Holy Qur'an in one place. Our apparel protects us from heat and cold, and provides adornment to the human body. In the same way, piety protects the man from vices and gives him dignity. Almighty Allah says:

If you adopt patience and piety, it is the virtue of very resolute people." (Aal e Imraan)

Translation: "If you practice patience and adopt piety, the craftiness and deception and the vicious plots of the enemy will not harm you." (Aal e Imraan)

Translation: "Almighty Allah is with the pious, forbearing, and righteous people." (An Nahl)

Translation:" Almighty Allah will provide him the way out (to save one self from vices), and provide him subsistence from sources which he never imagined of." (At Talaaq)

Translation: "Almighty Allah accepts the deeds of those alone who are virtuous." (Al Maaida)

Translation: "verily, in the opinion of Almighty Allah, the most respected among you is the one who is the most pious." (Al Hujraat)

Translation: "There are glad tidings of this world and the hereafter for those believers who are also pious." (Surah Younus)

Translation:" Then We will deliver the pious people from the Hellfire." (Surah Maryam)

In addition to these, there are other verses in the Holy Qur'an which show the importance of piety and the pious people.

In the light of Qur'an, the scholars have enumerated many benefits of piety. A few of them are listed below.

1. Almighty Allah Himself praises the pious person. Almighty Allah says:

"If you would adopt patience and piety, it is among the courageous acts."

2. A pious person is safe from the evil of enemy. "If you would adopt patience and piety, you will be protected from the craftiness and the deception of the opponents."

3. Pious people have the support of Almighty Allah. And Almighty Allah helps them. Almighty Allah says:

"Verily, Allah is with the pious and righteous people."

In another place Almighty Allah says:

"And Allah is the friend (supporter and patron) of the pious people."

4. The pious people will be safe from the horror and fright of the Day of Resurrection, and they will get abundant lawful subsistence in this world. Almighty Allah says:

"The one who makes piety and abstinence his way of life, Almighty Allah will provide for him generously, and would give him subsistence from such sources which he would have never imagined of."

5. Because of piety, man becomes deserving of respect and reverence in

the opinion of Almighty Allah. Almighty Allah says:

"In the opinion of Almighty Allah the one who is most pious is the

most deserving of respect."

6. The pious ones are given the glad tidings of remaining steadfast in their faith at the time of death, and of deliverance in the Hereafter.

"The ones, who believed and adopted the life of piety, are given the glad tidings of this world and the Hereafter."

TAQWA IN THE LIGHT OF HADEETH

Hazrat Abu Sayeed Qudri (RAA) narrates that once he asked the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) to give him a piece of advice. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said:" I advice you to acquire piety, because piety is at the root of all virtues." (Musnad Ahmad)

The Holy Prophet said:" I enjoin you to acquire fear of Allah (piety), because it renders refulgence to your dealings." (Musnad Ahmad)

The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said: "I exhort you to adopt piety both in public and in seclusion." (Musnad Ahmad)

Hazrat Abu Huraira (RAA) reports that once somebody asked the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) about the thing which takes the maximum number of people to the Paradise. The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) replied:" piety and good manners." (Tirmidhi)

A Companion came to the presence of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) and said:' O Messenger of Allah (pbuh)! Please give me some advice.' The Holy Prophet (pbuh) replied: "adopt piety because that is at the root of all virtues."

Hazrat Ayesha (RAA) reports:' the Holy Prophet (pbuh) never regarded anything with approval and admiration except a man with the attributes of piety and abstinence.'

Once, somebody asked the Holy Prophet (pbuh): 'O Messenger of Allah (pbuh)! Who is your family?' The Messenger of Allah (pbuh) replied: "Every pious believer is my family." (Ghuniya tut Talibeen)

The Holy Prophet (pbuh) has not given the good news of being his family on the doer of any virtuous deed. The golden words He (pbuh) used in order to describe the pious people are a reward for them and are a matter of great respect and honour.

Once, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) said:" the lawful and the unlawful things are quite obvious and well determined. But there are certain things in between these two. Not every person can tell between these two. Therefore, if there is a suspicion that a certain thing could be unlawful, it is better to shun it. Such a person who follows this rule saves his honour and religion. And the one who ventures in to doing the doubtful things may well be committing unlawful. It is akin to a cowherd grazing his herd on the edges of somebody else's pasture. There is a likelihood that the herd might enter into the pasture of the neighbour. Remember! Every king has his own pasture. And the pasture of Almighty Allah is His forbidden things." (Muslim: Kitaab ul Musaqah)

With the help of the illustration of pasture, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) has set those boundaries which are required in our religion, and which have been referred to as taqwa (piety) in the Holy Qur'an. This shows that a pious person not only shuns the unlawful things, but also tries to keep away from those things which he does not feel comfortable doing, though not declared clearly unlawful by the Shari'ah.

Once, Hazrat Wabsah (RAA) asked the Holy Prophet (pbuh) about the reality of virtue and sin. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) placed his hand on his chest and replied:" ask your heart, question your psyche (nafs)." This He (pbuh) repeated three times, and said:" virtue is something which provides satisfaction to your heart and peace to your psyche (nafs), and sin is something which pricks your psyche (nafs) and causes embarrassment in your heart, despite the fact that people have

given justification in its favour".

Once, it was mentioned in the presence of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) about a certain person who always kept himself busy in worship and remembrance of Allah, and another person who avoided unlawful things and kept away from doubtful things. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) affirmed:" do not compare abstinence with anything." This means the position of abstinence is very high. (Tirmidhi: Kitab e Sufat ul qayamah)

BENEFITS OF TAQWA IN THIS WORLD AND THE NEXT

Taqwa benefits a man, both in this world and the Hereafter. A few benefits are as follows:

1. Almighty Allah says:

وَمَنْ يَّتَّقِ اللّٰهَ يَجْعَلْ لَّهٗ مَخْرَجًا

Translation: "Almighty Allah provides a way out to the pious people for rescue from the difficulties and hardships of this world and the Hereafter.

That means 'ease in every thing' for the pious people.

2. Almighty Allah says:

وَيَرْزُقْهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا يَحْتَسِبُ۔

Translation:" Almighty Allah provides him subsistence from such sources which he would have never imagined."

That means for the pious people 'subsistence is no issue.'

3. Almighty Allah says:

وَمَنْ يَّتَّقِ اللّٰهَ يَجْعَلْ لَّهٗ مِنْ اَمْرِهٖ يُسْرًا

Translation: "Almighty Allah facilitates the tasks for the pious people."

That means for the pious 'ease in every task.'

4. Almighty Allah says:

وَمَنْ يَّتَّقِ اللّٰهَ يُكَفِّرْ عَنْهُ سَيِّاٰتِهٖ

Translation: "Almighty Allah forgives his sins."

That means for the pious people 'all sins forgiven.'

5. Almighty Allah increases the reward for his virtues.

“less effort more reward.”

6. Almighty Allah says:

وَيُعْظِمْ لَهٗ اَجْرًا

Translation: ”Almighty Allah bestows up on him the ability to judge right from wrong, and true from false.”

That means 'protection from deception.'

And finally with the barakah of his piety, the man becomes deserving of the Paradise. As is proclaimed by the Holy Qur'an:

اُعِدَّتْ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ۔

"eternal luxurious and pleasant life for the pious.”

All the above mentioned benefits have been mentioned in the Holy Qur'an by Almighty Allah. In short, the pious man is bestowed upon by Almighty Allah with all the respect and honour.

Almighty Allah has promised the pious one through many verses in the Holy Qur'an, help and succour, respect and honour, knowledge and wisdom, forgiveness from sins, increase in reward for virtues, ease in accomplishing the tasks, rescue from grief and misery, increase in subsistence, success in endeavours, love for Almighty Allah, excellence in worship, and proximity to Almighty Allah in the Paradise.

(Nazrat ul Nayeem)

HOW TO ACHIEVE PIETY?

No particular invocation or act of worship is required to acquire piety and become pious.

You should do Nothing.

Yes, nothing you should do.

Believe me, really you should do Nothing.

In fact you should abandon doing something

Yes. You should abandon doing something.

Believe me, you should only abandon something.

Now I want to ask you whether it is easier to do something or abandon it.

Certainly, your answer will be that it is easier to abandon something.

Thus, to acquire piety the one thing that you DONT have to do is committing sins. You have to abandon committing sins. You have to avoid sins as any cost.

To have a firm intention of abandoning sins and suppressing one's desires is the means through which one can acquire piety and become pious.

For example, Hajj is an important fundamental pillar of Islam. When Almighty Allah commanded the believers to perform Hajj, He instructed us to avoid lustful talk, keep away from sinning and quarrels, do virtuous acts, and make these things a way of our life, because piety is the best way of life.

In other words, while performing Hajj, to protect ourselves from carnal desires, to protect our tongue from abuse and foul mouthing, our feet and hands from conflict and clash, and to engage ourselves in virtuous deeds is the conduct which has been referred to as piety. It has also been made clear that if a pilgrim (Haaji) does not carry himself in this manner; it is likely that he will ruin his Hajj.

Further, after commanding us to adopt piety, Almighty Allah has exhorted us to take the company of the true and sincere people.

Once, Shaikh ul Hadeeth Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Zakariyya Sahib (RA), while addressing the scholars, observed that the essence of his entire life was to adopt the following five acts and become pious.

1. 'the company of the Godly people', that is, to be in the company of the pious people.
2. 'Continued remembrance of Allah', that is, to remember Almighty Allah with regularity.

3. 'Protection from sins', that is,to keep away from evil doing.

4. 'Distance from the causes of sins' that is, to keep away from the things which may lead to sinning.

5. 'Sticking to the Sunnah', that is, to follow Sunnah religiously.

It is a great favour from Almighty Allah on us that He has favoured us with a great opportunity in the form of the month of Ramadan to adorn our lives with piety, where in man can become pious with minimal effort. But the condition is that the acts of worship should be carried out in the manner befitting them, and which would give us the required benefit. Otherwise, though technically the fast would have been observed, it would not result in piety.

Friends! In the past also we have observed fasts, and have carried out certain acts of worship which are particular to Ramadan, but how many of us have become pious? If we did not acquire piety then we should think over the reasons for that?

Is it that, God forbid, the month of Ramadan has lost its distinctive feature of making people pious? Or is it that we did not care much about the real purpose of this month and spent it by just performing a few rituals.

In the same way, we should also examine and see whether in the past whenever we observed fasts, did we just fast? Or did we have in our mind that we want to become pious with the help of these fasts?

Did we think while fasting in the past that with this act of worship we want to please Almighty Allah? Or we just fasted as a habit?

Whatever is your answer, I am inclined to think that we fasted in the past just for the sake of fasting -fasted without any purpose. We fasted because it was the month of Ramadan, and

every body fasts, so we also fasted. All it needs is to get up in the night, eat night meal (sahri), starve throughout the day, and break the fast in the evening with a variety of delicacies.

Friends! If fasting is supposed to be only these things, then what is the use of such a fast?

It is narrated in a Hadeeth that if a person does not avoid telling lies while fasting, Almighty Allah does not need his hunger and thirst.

I want to ask you a question. When you want to do a job, do you want to just do it, in whatever way you could? Or you want to do it in the best way possible?

For example, if a degree holder is in need of a job, will he want to take up any job available-the job of a peon or the job of a watchman? Or would he search for a job befitting his qualification? Obviously everyone would like to have his work accomplished in the best way possible.

Similarly when we want to construct a house what would we like to do? We would first like to consult an architect, obtain a good plan from him so that the house we construct is spacious and comfortable; the windows should be wide which would give proper light and ventilation. We will also give a thought to the walls and the floor etc etc.

We give thought to each and every minor detail while constructing our house- and there is nothing wrong in that. But the question is: why are our thoughts and worries limited only to the transitory worldly things? Why don't we think in the same way for the acts of worship which result in the everlasting blessings of the Hereafter?

Why do we adopt such double standards-one for the worldly things and the other pertaining to the Hereafter? To construct something mortal and transitory like a house we consult and take the opinion of an architect by paying his fee, but in case of

fasts of the month of Ramadan for which Almighty Allah has promised the everlasting Paradise, we never consult a Mufti, or a scholar or someone knowledgeable, to find out what we should do and what not, to gain piety.

For example, you buy the clothes for Eid. By the way, the shopping for the clothes etc should be completed in the month of Rajab or Sha'baan itself. The month of Ramadan is not meant for shopping and roaming around in the market along with your wives.

Anyway, while getting clothes stitched for Eid, what is playing in our minds? We all want to buy the best cloth available within our budget, and want to get it stitched in the best way possible. If we do not have the correct knowledge of the cloth etc we take along our friends who are knowledgeable. In short, every sensible man wants to accomplish his worldly task in the best way possible.

But friends!

Why don't we have the same concern for Ramadan?

Why don't we have the same concern for our prayers?

Why don't we show the same concern for the recitation of Qur'an and remembrance of Allah?

In the month of Ramadan, we do recite Qur'an frequently. But did we ever pay attention to the fact whether or not our recitation will get approval of Almighty Allah? Whereas when we put on new clothes we see in the mirror to see how the fitting is? Does it suit us? When we get a hair cut, we see in the mirror to see if everything is alright. If something is not to our satisfaction we tell the barber and get it corrected. In our entire life we have been concerned about looking good to ourselves and to the others, but did we ever show concern to appear good to Almighty Allah, and appear good to the Messenger of Allah (pbuh)?

Friends! Ramadan ul Mubarak is a month for making

ourselves good. In this month we should make ourselves so good that we should appear good in the eyes of Almighty Allah and His Messenger (pbuh). For that we have to make our Ramadan good. We should respect this month. Now the question is how do we make Ramadan good? And what is meant by giving due regard to this month? What are the things which make our fasts invalid?

We should all know that a good fast is one which is devoid of sins. And the fast which is devoid of sins makes us good-makes good means makes pious. Now the rewards which are meant for piety will be awarded to us. We will be victorious in both the worlds. Almighty Allah will reward us more than we desire. We will be made king without crown in this world and will get real kingship in the Paradise- such kingship that all our desires will be fulfilled without any means-just on our showing inclination for them. We get this type of luxury for how many days, or for how many years?

One cannot imagine.

One cannot comprehend.

How can we ask for something which is beyond our comprehension?

And we will get such rewards for doing what?

By performing how many Hajj?

By performing how many Umrahs?

By doing how many prayers?

By doing how much recitation?

By doing how much remembrance of Allah?

By giving out how much in charity?

All these good deeds you normally do. Please keep doing. But we don't ask you to do anything.

If you want to achieve piety (righteousness) you don't have to do anything, rather you will have to abandon doing something.

What to abandon?

Evil deeds; and bad habits.

Alright you please tell me,

Do you like these evil deeds (sins)?

Not at all, because you are a believer.

Please tell honestly

Don't you feel remorse after sinning?

You feel uneasy deep inside your heart, and decide not to repeat it (sinning).

Make the intention firm of not sinning.

And stick to it.

Pray to Almighty Allah to help you stick to it.

You will achieve piety.

And if ever again the devil or your psyche (nafs) deceive you in to doing it, repent immediately.

Beseech Almighty Allah to forgive you.

Almighty Allah is our own; is very compassionate; never shuts the doors of forgiveness. He (swt) in fact announces in the night:" O sinners of the day! Night has befallen. Repent. I will forgive you."

He (swt) announces in the morning: "O sinners of the night! Seek forgiveness from me. I am a great Forgiver."

Sometimes He (swt) says:" what am I going to gain by punishing you?" I am your Compassionate Lord, and I forgive many of your sins without your asking for it."

Therefore, due to our weak human nature or under the influence of our psyche (nafs) and and because of temptation of devil if we commit sins, we should not delay repenting. Repent immediately.

You become pious again after repenting.

Hazrat Thanwi (RA) writes that it is as easy to remain pious as it is to stay with ablution (ba wuzu). When the ablution breaks, make a fresh ablution. In the same way if you commit

sin, repent immediately. You will become pious again.

Therefore, as I said that to become pious you don't have to do anything. You just have to abandon sinning. If we cannot bring ourselves to abandoning something, how can we prepare ourselves to do something which we have been ordained to do? Even if we do, we do it in a way that is not approved by Almighty Allah. If Almighty Allah doesn't hold us guilty for that, it is His (swt) magnanimity.

Therefore friends! Make a firm resolution that you will not commit any sins during this month.

It is narrated that sinning tears up the fast, and nobody accepts something that is torn.

Once, while travelling from Kalina to Santacruz, I gave a Five rupee currency note to the conductor which was a little torn. The fare was 4.50 rupees.

The conductor asked me to give a different currency note. I asked him whether the currency note I gave was a fake one. He said it is not a fake but it is torn. I said anyway you are not going to take home this currency note. You will deposit it in the bank. He said:' Maulana! I cannot issue you a ticket with this currency note.' I told him:' the fare is 4.50 and the currency note is of five rupee value. You give me the ticket and keep the change. The conductor said:' Maulana! Please don't argue with me. If you can give a different currency note please give otherwise get down here itself.'

Friends! Is it not something to ponder? You cannot buy a 4.50 rupee ticket with the help of a torn five rupee currency note. Will we get the eternal abode of Paradise with the help of a torn fast? The currency note which is signed by the Governor of Reserve Bank of India and has his seal, and nobody can say it is a fake. But if it is a bit torn, you cannot buy a bus ticket with it. So can we think of getting Paradise with the help of a torn fast?

Therefore, we should examine ourselves and ask as to why did we fast? If we fasted because we wanted to get Paradise, then we should stop tearing up our fasts with sins. Everyone who fasts wants his fast to be accepted by Almighty Allah. But many a time due to our negligence or deception of psyche (nafs) we spend the day in fasting, but are deprived of the real benefits of the fast. If we do a little struggle and keep our psyche (nafs) under control and thereby spend Ramadan ul Mubarak in a good way, then the entire year will pass in a good way, and we will achieve piety.

WHY IS IT EASIER TO ACHIEVE PIETY IN RAMADAN

It is easier in Ramadan to abandon sinning and achieve Taqwa (piety). Because the things which induce you to commit sins are two:

1. the psyche (nafs) 2. the devil (satan)

The devil is chained in the month of Ramadan, and the psyche gets half dead (weak) in this month due to the effect of fasting and night prayers (taraweeh). It is easier to fight a weak opponent. On the other hand in the other months it is not so easy.

One more thing one should understand here is that the devil and the psyche induce us to commit two types of sins:

1. Manifest sins such as theft, adultery, lascivious looks etc

2. Non-manifest sins such as envy, spite, conceit etc.

Sharia'ah demands that we abandon both types of sins. Almighty Allah says:

وَذَرُوا ظَاهِرَ الْإِثْمِ وَبَاطِنَهُ

Translation: "Avoid both manifest and non-manifest sins."

But in reality, we keep away from the manifest sins to a certain extent, or at least try to do that. But, despite being fully

sunk in the non-manifest sins, we don't even as much as consider them to be sins, let anole of repenting about them, save what Allah wishes. We perform all our acts of worship such as prayers, fasts, night prayers (taraweeh) etc with these non-manifest sins in attendance. That is the reason we do not benefit from our acts of worship to the extent we should.

Therefore, it is necessary that we repent from the manifest as well as non-manifest sins. True repentance will open up the gates to achieve piety.

If we do not repent in the month of Ramadan, and do not fight the devil and our psyche (nafs) with courage, it will be very difficult for us to do it in other months, and we will spend the entire year engaged in these sins.

It becomes easier to abandon sinning in the month of Ramadan. There are other reasons too for this

First reason: A very famous commentary of the Holy Qur'an titled 'Jalaleen' mentions لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُوْنَ after
اَلْمَعَاصِیَ فَاِنَّهٗ یُکَسِّرُ الشَّهوةَ الَّتِیْ هِیَ مَبْدَؤُهَا (Jalaleen)

'The purpose behind fasting is to abandon sins. Abandoning sins becomes easier due to fasting, because the desires of the flesh, which are at the root of all the sins, are overpowered due to fasting.

This is supported by a Hadeeth too.

Once, the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said while addressing the youth:" whoever among you can marry must marry, because it will help you in lowering your gaze, and you will be saved from misusing your private parts. If someone can not marry because of its attendant expenditure, then he should fast, because fasting will kill his libido."

Second reason: The sins committed by man are either because of the hunger of the stomach (desire to eat) or the hunger of his private parts (desire for sex). In fact fasting is the second name for abstaining from eating and sexual

intercourse. Through fasting we close the door on both these triggers of sinning. It is therefore certain that through fasting one can successfully abandon sins or at least bring them down.

Third reason: It is natural that the things which are very dear to us are very difficult to give up. Eating and sexual intercourse are the two most sought after things for a man. In the state of fasting, in accordance to the Commandments of Almighty Allah, when a man refrains from these two things, it becomes easier for him to abandon other small temptations. (Tafseer e Kabir).

That is why it is easier to achieve piety in the month of Ramadan, which is difficult in other months. Let us all pray to Almighty Allah to bless us with piety. Let us also make every effort to achieve it.

THIS WAY TO ACHIEVE PIETY

In order to achieve the worldly things, we put in a lot of efforts, take advice of experienced and knowledgeable people, and use whatever means are required to achieve them. In the same way, to achieve piety, we have to put in efforts and learn from the knowledgeable people and prepare ourselves to put their advice in to practice.

For example, if you want to buy a house, you pray to Almighty Allah and take opinion of the knowledgeable people. You don't stop at praying to

Almighty Allah and taking the opinion of knowledgeable people, but also go to the site, talk to the owner of the house or the agent, see the documents etc etc. After satisfying yourself from all angles you go ahead and buy the house. In the same way, to achieve piety we will have to do certain things. Just having intention to achieve it will not be sufficient.

جذبات پہ ہی اپنے نہ مجذوب شادرہ
جذبات ہیچ ہیں، جو مرتب عمل نہ ہو

Translation:" Do not be happy just with the passion *Majzoob* (name of poet). Passion alone has no meaning without the backing of action."

First task: The first thing that you should do is to offer 'salat ut tauba' before the onset of Ramadan ul Mubarak, and do true repentance from the earlier sins. Admit your mistakes before Almighty Allah: 'O Allah, we have spent our lives in disobedience to your Commandments. Today we repent our sins from the depth of our heart. Please forgive us.'

Seek Almighty Allah's forgiveness from the depth of your heart. Then offer 'salat ul haajjah' and beseech Almighty Allah thus: 'O Allah! Ramadan ul Mubarak is fast approaching, with all its bounties, blessings, and abundances. You have told that this is the month to acquire piety. Please bless us with total piety. Please bestow on us the bounties, favours and the refulgence of this month. You have sent this month for us to achieve piety. We are the needy ones. We beg of you to bless us with piety. Give us your total love and total refulgence- such refulgence which can be felt.

Friends! You must implore and beseech Almighty Allah in the manner a child cries, rolls on the ground and persists obstinately

No, no

Please give me, please give me

Give me

Please give me.

When a child asks in this manner, we feel love for him. And we fulfill his desire. So we should ask Almighty Allah in the same manner. We should also beg Almighty Allah to help us in observing fast in a way which He (swt) likes, and to make us the leader among the pious people and to help us reach the pinnacle of saintliness, with the blessing of this sacred month.

Second task: The second thing which you must do is to

save yourself from committing sins, because sinning robs you of spirituality. When someone fears that he could be robbed in a certain place, and still does nothing to protect himself, then it is certain that he will be robbed.

If you know that three pick pockets are present in the bus stand, and if you have money on your person, will you not take care to save your money? Certainly you will be careful. You will not board buses which are crowded. If somebody is accompanying you, you would ask him to keep a watch on you from behind. Because you know that if you are careless here, you are sure to lose your money. In the same way, if we do not safeguard our virtues in the month of Ramadan and do not keep our selves away from sinning, then we will destroy all the virtues that we had earned

Third task: The third thing which is very important and without which it is impossible to achieve Taqwa (piety), is to do self-examination in every erea of religion. We must learn from the scholars and repent for the mistakes committed and try to shape our lives in the mould of Sunnah and Shari'ah.

SELF-EXAMINATION A MUST FOR ACHIEVING PIETY

It is necessary that one submits oneself totally to Almighty Allah's Commandments in every department of religion. And for total submission it is necessary that one examines himself in all the five departments of the religion viz faith, acts of worship, dealings, social matters, and ethics, and see which department he lacks in and where. Wherever one finds himself lacking, he should repent his shortcomings and try to avoid them in future.

ACTS OF WORSHIP: We should check upon our acts of worship, for example, to see

How are our prayers?

How do we recite the Holy Qur'an?

Do we concentrate while doing remembrance of Allah?

If prior to arrival of Ramadan, we had been doing all these acts of worship without proper attention and against the Sunnah , now we should repent our negligence and take a decision to start praying in the future with due attention and in accordance with Sunnah, and to keep in touch with the scholars for this purpose.

You can find many of our discourses regarding prayers (namaz) on our web site: www.shariat.info

Please remember, if somebody's prayer is good every thing he does will be good.

His life will be good

His death will be good

His grave will be good

His end will be good

His resurrection will be good

Each of his tasks will be good.

Sunnah acts will keep entering his life.

Rites and rituals will start dropping out

Love for Almighty Allah will increase

Love for the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) will increase

And when this love reaches perfection, it will take the believer to perfection

And the performance of tasks will become easier

And abandoning the forbidden things will become easier

And the 'streamlined prayer' plays an important role in setting right other departments of religion that are going to come for discussion in the coming pages.

If any missed prayers are due on you, perform them after asking the scholars about it.

One must perform missed prayers in the month of Ramadan rather than performing supererogatory prayers.

DEALINGS: One should also check up on his dealings after having checked up on his acts of worship.

Today we see a lot of deficiency among many of us in fulfilling the rights of fellow humans (huquq ul ibaad). For us, religiosity has remained confined to praying and fasting.

Hazrat Sufiyan Souri (RA) says that if a person arrives with seventy of disobediences of Almighty Allah on the Doomsday, it is a lighter crime compared to arriving with a single violation of the right of a fellow human, because Almighty Allah is independent and unconcerned, whereas the humans are needy. It is therefore necessary to be very careful about the duties towards fellow humans.

'Dealings' is a very important department of religion. The virtues which are earned through acts of worship could be transferred to others on account of ignoring to fulfill the duties towards them.

It is written in 'Durr e mukhtar' that if somebody owes a person 3 paise, 700 of his prayers will be transferred to that person (creditor).

In the department of 'dealings' the issue of inheritance is very important and deserving of attention. But at the same time we see that it is one of the most neglected and un-attended issues. If you have true intention of changing the course of your life for good during the month of Ramadan, then hopefully you must have given the dues of your sisters and other partners in inheritance. God forbid, if you did not do it, then enquire from a scholar and try to do it as early as possible.

In the matter of huquq ul ibaad (rights of fellow humans), the payment of dower to one's wife is also equally important.

It is narrated that the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said:" If a man marries a woman by fixing a certain amount of dower, but does not have the intention of paying it, or intends to pay less than what has been fixed, then he will die the death of a

fornicator." (Huquq ul Ibaad)

Therefore it is necessary to pay attention in this regard.

If you are a businessman, and do lawful business, you should not be under the wrong impression that there is nothing to enquire from the scholars about your business. Please remember! You need to ask regarding different issues when the business is lawful. If the business is unlawful, then it is unlawful from every aspect. There is nothing to ask about something unlawful. It can not be lawful from any angle.

Therefore, you must ask about the issues concerning lawful businesses from the scholars. For the businessman, it is as important to learn about the issues concerning his business, as it is to learn about the issues concerning prayers and fasting- rather more important than that, because the rights of fellow humans are connected with business. And to show negligence in the fulfillment of rights of fellow humans will cause a great loss in the Hereafter. Till now if you did not get the opportunity to learn about those issues, now at least you must make a firm decision to learn from the scholars.

What will you ask? And how will you ask?

There are many things that you must ask. For example:

Terms of purchases

Terms of sales

Terms of payment

Cash discount

Different forms of concessions in cash discount

In case of credit sales, how many days credit?

Percentage of margin

If payment not recovered within the credit period, can you charge extra?

Is it permissible or not?

Issues like these and many others are to be enquired about.

Another common problem faced is when an agreement to

sell a property takes place and a certain amount of money is paid as advance, and if the buyer does not make the remaining payment even after the due date despite reminders, the deal is called off and the money paid as advance is forfeited. Is such forfeiture of money paid as advance permissible or not?

There are many such things which are encountered in day to day dealings and businesses which need to be enquired from the scholars. Sometimes we realize after enquiring that we would incur loss if we followed it.

We should know it well that nobody incurs loss by following the Shari'ah. As far as one's livelihood is concerned, nobody gets less than what he is destined to get.

If somebody intends to change his life for good in the month of Ramadan then he should be concerned about all these things. Along with the concern for it one should also keep trying for it and pray Almighty Allah to help him out in shaping all his dealings in accordance to Shari'ah.

SOCIAL LIFE: Human beings like living together, and are inter-dependent for their needs. Those who frequently meet one another include family members, relatives, neighbours, and friends and associates. And a man also spends time together with those who work with him or are his business neighbours. This staying together is called social life. People staying in a society have some rights and some obligations towards one another. Islamic Shari'ah requires one to keep this in mind and show solicitude towards one and all.

Hazrat Anas (RAA) reports that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) said:" none among you will be a true believer unless he develops the attribute of choosing for his Muslim brother what he chooses for himself."

Almighty Allah has issued injunctions in the Holy Qur'an, and we also find in detail the sayings of Messenger of Allah

(pbuh) regarding the social life. These are called the injunctions of social life, which form an important part of the religion. Generally, people don't consider this as a part of religion. That is why they neither ask any questions regarding social issues nor do they act upon it.

In order to achieve total piety in the month of Ramadan, it is necessary for us to do our own appraisal in the department of social life. For example, in our household, prior to Ramadan, if the women did not observe veil, now they should start observing it.

For example, prior to Ramadan, if our nephew usually entered our house without any restriction, and talked to his aunt and female cousins without veil, then this Ramadan if he comes you should explain to him politely thus: ' now we have decided to observe veil as prescribed by Shari'ah abandoning the customary veil. Therefore, whenever you want to enter our house, you must announce your arrival so that we can take our veils. It is a matter of happiness for us if you come to our house, and you may do so as many times as you like, but talking to these women folk without veil has been prohibited by Shari'ah. So please bear it in mind next time.'

In case of marriages, whatever customs and rituals we usually did should be abandoned, and next time whenever there is a marriage in the house, we must ask a scholar or a knowledgeable person to tell us about the Shari'ah injunctions regarding the celebration of marriage, and act accordingly.

If you did not do this before the arrival of Ramadan, then you can say that you are just interested in observing fasts. You can not achieve piety with such fasts, although you will be discharged from the duty of observing fast. It is akin to opening the shop but not earning any income. You should therefore be not content with just discharging your duty. As you are concerned about good results in your worldly affairs,

you should strive and be concerned about the religious matters too.

ETHICS:

Ethics is one of the important departments of religion. It is narrated in one

Prophetic saying that a believer with true faith is one whose manners are

the best.

The Holy Prophet (pbuh) affirmed:" verily, the heaviest thing that would be kept in the scales of a believer on the Day of Resurrection will be his good manners. Then he (pbuh) said:" verily, Almighty Allah has enmity with the ill-mannered person." (Tirmidhi)

All the Prophets of Allah (as) possessed good manners and Almighty Allah had placed the last Prophet (pbuh) at the highest level of manners.

Hazrat Thanwi (RA) says with regard to manners that after a careful study of the Prophetic sayings it can be deduced that the essence of manners is that one should not be the cause of trouble or inconvenience to others. One should be thoughtful of one's manners in order to achieve piety in the month of Ramadan.

I dealt briefly with the above mentioned departments of religion, so that you are made aware of the areas where you can fall a victim to the tricks of the devil and your psyche (nafs), and where all you need the correct knowledge and guidance of the scholars.

INQUIRE FROM SCHOLARS AND ACT

If we intend to achieve total piety in this Ramadan ul Mubarak, then we will be required to inquire about the above

mentioned departments of the religion from the scholars. We should repeatedly ask about small and big issues, and this process of asking should be a continuous one. Almighty Allah has commanded in the Holy Qur'an:

فَاسْئَلُوْا اَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ" (سورہ انبیاء آیت نمبر ۷)

Translation:" If you don't know, ask the ones who know." (Surat ul Anbia)

If somebody feels that he knows everything, so what is there to be asked? Then he will spend the month of Ramadan in negligence, and there is a likelihood that this month instead of becoming the cause for blessing and deliverance, would turn out to be a month of destruction and loss. Such unfortunate person may spoil his affairs in both the worlds on account of Hazrat Jibril's curse and the Holy Prophet's (pbuh) saying amen (so be it) on that curse.

Therefore it is very necessary that you go to knowledgeable persons and learn the correct way of spending Ramadan from them.

The devil and our psyche (nafs) will keep us contented that
"we know every thing"
"we know each and every thing."
"what have you to do in Ramadan?'

Offer taraveeh, eat sahari (night meal), observe fast, and do iftaar. That is all about Ramadan.

Generally that is what is in the minds of people.

THE DISEASE OF NOT INQUIRING

These days the disease of not inquiring about the religious matters has become so common that we don't even inquire about the prayers (which are offered 5 times a day), as to what makes the prayer good and what renders it bad.

We ourselves don't like our prayers, then how can we expect it to be approved by Almighty Allah.

The epidemic of not inquiring about the religious matters is so wide spread that every one seems to be a victim of it, save what God wills.

The trustee of the mosque and the madrasa doesn't inquire
The master doesn't ask and the servant doesn't ask
The owner doesn't ask and the worker doesn't ask
The trader doesn't ask and the agriculturist doesn't ask

Alright these are all worldly people. It doesn't matter whether they inquire are do not inquire.

The irony is that today the religious people also do not inquire. Today's religious people-who are today's religious people?

Beard, skull cap, kurta pyjama, and other features; knowing a little and not knowing much- and despite this ignorance expecting others to call them religious- this is today's religious man. Exactly the same as today's money lender.

Loan on house, loan on the vehicle, and loan on the office, but pretends in front of others that he is a big business man. God be praised.

Burdened with loan, pays lacs of rupees as interest, but expects others to call him with the suffix 'sait'. Because of the tension of the loans he has lost the sleep and peace of mind. May Almighty Allah save us all from becoming such a 'sait'.

Today's religious man too, adopts the features of religiosity, offers a few prayers-that too without interest, goes to the mosque fully occupied with the thoughts of the creatures of Allah, never bothers to know about the shortcomings of his prayer. He doesn't bother whether or not he remembered Almighty Allah in his prayers. He did not go to the mosque to remember Almighty Allah in the first place, so it doesn't make any difference whether he remembered Him (swt) or not.

Such a negligent person who offers a thoughtless prayer, and who does not remember Almighty Allah even in the

mosque, can not be expected to remember Allah (swt) in the market place.

The one, who did not become religious despite going to the mosque, can not be expected to become religious in the market place. How can you expect person to possess the religion of dealings, social life and ethics who does not possess the religion of prayers and the religion of the mosque? He is a religiously bankrupt person. But still he expects people to call him religious.

By resorting to back-biting, and slandering he has lost his virtues to the others, and took up on himself their sins. A pauper for all times, but still he is displeased at not being called religious, like the money lender.

Today's religious man is under the influence of the devil and his own psyche (nafs), which keep telling him: 'you know everything', and he is satisfied with this. He neither inquires about the religious matters nor feels the need to inquire. As a result, the prayers which he offers daily (and which is almost 40 rakah,) are also defective owing to not inquiring about the issues involved. He keeps repeating those mistakes throughout his life. When this is the state of his prayers which he offers daily, what to say of the fasts which are observed once in a year for only a month;

and the 20 rakah of taraveeh prayer which is to be offered for one month once in a year;

and the Hajj which is to be performed once in a life time;

and the Umrah which is to be performed occasionally.

will he bother to inquire and learn issues about these acts of worship?

And the only reason for not inquiring and learning about them is his thinking that

“I know every thing, and therefore no need of inquiring from the knowledgeable people.”

Who are the knowledgeable people?
The scholars

THE CONSPIRACY OF CUTTING OFF FROM SCHOLARS

I feel it worth mentioning here that among the conspiracies of the enemies of Islam, one of the greatest one is to sever the relationship of Ummah from the scholars. The enemies of Islam know it very well that as long as the Ummah is connected with the scholars, and does every thing after inquiring from them, it would be difficult for their conspiracies to work.

Some of you may think that my allegations are baseless. But the conspiracies of the enemies of Islam are so secretive, organized and so powerful that even the best among us fall victim to it. May Almighty Allah fail the enemies in their efforts? But they certainly are conspiring against Muslims and Islam.

Even English historians have written about the conspiracy of the enemy to sever the link between the Muslim Ummah and the scholars,

During the first war of freedom, it was famous Islamic scholar and Muhaddis (scholar in Holy Traditions), Shah Abdul Aziz Muhaddis Dehlvi, and Maulana Shah Fazal e Haq Khairabadi, who first gave the fatwa (religious edict) for revolt against the British rule in the year 1779. and the last battle in this connection was fought in 1857. After this battle, the British Viceroy called his advisors and discussed with them the various strategies through which the British can continue to rule India. Many suggestions came. Here I present an extract from one of the reports.

Dr. William, who was one of the famous politicians of that time, wrote:

'War of freedom has been fought by Muslims alone, and they still have the passion for the jihad (religious war). We can not rule over them until the passion of Jihad is removed from their minds. And the only way we can do this is by:

"Finishing scholars and the Holy Qur'an from India'

The British started implementing this report, and in the year 1861, 3 lakh copies of the Holy Qur'an were burnt. Then there was an organized conspiracy of finishing off the scholars. Between 1864 and 1867, fourteen

thousand scholars were executed through hanging.

British historian Tomson reports:

'From Delhi to Khaibar, there was not a single tree on which a scholar was not hanged. Scholars were wrapped in the skin of pigs and burnt in the ovens. The bodies of the scholars were branded with hot copper. Scholars were made to mount the elephants and then tied to the branches of trees, and then the elephants were made to walk off from there, thus causing them to hang'. Tomson writes that in the Shahi mosque of Lahore they had put up a noose, and daily 80 scholars were hanged over there. 80 scholars were tied up in the sacks and thrown into river Raavi, and then they were made the targets of bullets.

Tomson writes: 'when I was in Delhi, one day I smelled the odour of dead bodies. When I came behind my tent I saw the embers glowing. Meanwhile, 40 scholars were brought, their clothes taken out, and then they were thrown on the burning embers. A British man came out and shouted: "O scholars! You will also be burnt the way these 40 have been burnt. Only escape route for you is to declare that you had not participated in the 1857 war of freedom.' Tomson says:' I swear by my creator! All the scholars were thrown one by one in the fire, but there was not even one who submitted to the British.'

Friends! Please think over. Why only scholars were made the target in these cases? They knew that if scholars are

finished, the followers will die their own death.

Today the scholars are not being openly killed, but the conspiracy to sever the relationship and keep the common men away from the scholars is being implemented.

It is the result of this conspiracy that the atmosphere of not inquiring from the scholars is prevalent among the common man. The Ummah (the followers) are getting distanced from the scholars day by day. And when the religion is not learnt in its correct form from the scholars, the rituals prevalent in the society are followed as the real religion.

I would like to give a small example here. Scholars have declared that the money taken as a gift, or wages-whether settled in advanced or not, for taraveeh prayers is unlawful and not permissible on the basis of

اَلْمَعْرُوْفُ كَالْمَشْرُوْطِ

But because of not inquiring the correct position of Sharia'ah, this impermissible act is openly being carried out collectively in the Holy month of Ramadan, on the 27th night, and in the house of Allah, thinking that this is a religious act. And people rebuke the one who tries to show them the correct position of Shari'ah regarding money given as hadiya (gift) to the Haafiz for taraveeh prayers.

Please think over. What is the result of not inquiring with the scholars?

'The night of reward became the night of punishment.'

May Almighty Allah bless us with the correct understanding, and favour us with the habit of inquiring about different issues of religion from the scholars and implementing them in our lives. Amen

NEED TO LEARN RELIGION ALONG WITH PREACHING AND PROPAGATION

The benefit of preaching and propagation of religion is quite

evident. It has helped the Ummah which was totally negligent towards religion to the extent that they had forgotten even the article of faith and prayers,

Involved in shirk (associating partners to Allah) and bid'aat (religious innovations)

Victim of customs and rituals

Prisoner of irreligiousness

Worshiping idols at home and calling out to things other than Allah

Not remembering that there is some one called Allah.

When I went with the Jamaat for 40 days and for 4 months I saw such things which I mentioned above. Even now the condition of the Ummah (Muslim nation) is very bad.

Once, we went with the Jamaat. The local guide took us to a Muslim advocate's office. We were shocked to see his office. You may not believe that the walls of his office were decorated with the framed photographs of Hindu gods. When the local guide asked me to talk to the advocate, the advocate got wild at him and said:' how many times I have asked you not to bring these religious people to me,'

Our local guide was this advocate's childhood friend and college-mate. He said to the advocate in a friendly tone:' keep quite and listen to what Maulana wants to say.'

I got the opportunity to talk to him about the religion for a few minutes.

This place is about 60 km from Mumbai Church gate. We were on a three day sojourn (jamaat).

In the next three day sojourn we again went to this advocate, and met and talked to him. This time his attitude was a little different.

Next six months whenever we went on a three day sojourn (seh roza jamaat) we made it a point to meet the advocate. With the blessing of Almighty Allah he has repented his past

life and has become a true and devout Muslim now. This was the very person who used to be in the lead for collecting donations for the Ganapathi festival earlier. He also used to be in the forefront while taking out the idol for immersion. But now he is in the forefront of religious preaching and propagation work, and through his efforts Almighty Allah has saved many people from being misled.

This was almost 20 to 25 years back. A few days back I happened to meet him. He has grown full beard and much of his hair has gone grey. I did not recognize him. He realized that I did not recognize him. He abruptly hugged me, and said: 'I am the same advocate. Almighty Allah made you the cause of my guidance. I have good news for you. For the second time I am going in a jamaat abroad.' I felt very happy, and thanked Almighty Allah from the depth of my heart, and said: 'O Allah! this is your own work. You extract this work from whomsoever you want. Please keep me attached to the work of preaching and propagation till my last breath, and accept me for my whole life for this work, and let me spend my life with due regard to the principles of this work.' Amen.

This was the state of affairs of an educated man. Now please also know a little about the uneducated people.

In the same area, a little away from the town, there is a chain of mountains inhabited by hundreds of Muslim labourers. After the Maghrib prayers we went round to meet these people. These people finish their work a little before Maghrib prayer. We went to each hut but did not find a single man, except three youths. We learnt that there is a distillery near by and all of them have gone there to drink liquor. Only these three youths did not drink.

We talked to them and took them with us to the mosque. None of those three knew the article of faith by heart. We tried to teach them till the time of Isha prayer. They tried but could

not learn by heart. We had hopes with them that they may learn, because they did not drink liquor. After the Fajr prayer, again we started working on them. By the Grace of Almighty Allah, they started pronouncing the words correctly after some time. This I consider as a very valuable achievement.

A believer can well understand the distress one would have felt after seeing the state of affairs of the people of this locality. We discussed among ourselves and decided that we should talk to them even if they were drunk.

Next day we reached their locality after the Isha prayers. The huts were lined up on both sides of a lane. We asked for a mat from them and sat there itself in the lane. The men who were drunk sat there and the women stood in the doors. They heard us in their drunken state and in between would call out….wow Maulana…wow

Due to frequent visits, and with the Grace of Almighty Allah, one of them who was the leader among them agreed to go with a 40 day jamaat. When he came back after spending 40 days in the jamaat, he became the cause for many joining the work of dawah.

I have narrated a small incident of my life. If I start narrating incidents of such nature that we encounter, I can compile a voluminous book. And at the world level, the work being done is so enormous that if it is compiled in the form of books, one would not be able to read them completely.

In short these are the efforts which enliven the dead spirit among the Ummah, and the Ummah turns towards the religion. The fact that Almighty Allah has placed the success of this world and the Hereafter in the religion will be firmly entrenched in their minds. One gets the idea of treading the true path of religion by engaging one self in this dawah work. Obviously, when one wants to tread the correct path of religion, he would have to inquire from the scholars. And this

business of asking is not a one time affair. He will keep on asking time and again, and this frequent inquiring from scholars will result in developing better relationship with them and that in turn will create love and affection for them. And he will start considering them as his benefactors. This would not let him sever his relationship with scholars rather it would strengthen it. Therefore, the work of preaching and propagation of religion is that of connecting, and not severing relationship with the scholars.

If the one who takes up dawah work (saaathi) does not inquire from scholars, in my opinion, he is doing this work to show to others and not for his own correction. He has not understood the dawah work at all. And if some body thinks that to go out on the dawah work itself is sufficient, then this is foolishness. When people start thinking that just going out on the dawah work itself is sufficient, then they will neither feel the need to learn religion nor to inquire from the scholars. It should be clearly understood that a person who thinks this way is the victim of falsehood. One should not pay heed to such people.

The dawah work (tableeghi work) which was started from the bungalow wali masjid, Nizamuddin, Delhi, by Hazrat Maulana Ilyas (RA), emphasizes that if one comes out in the way of Allah, and practices the six things, then he will find it easier to follow the entire religion. The need to follow the religion in its totality will be felt when one comes out in the way of Allah, and to fulfill this need one has to inquire from the scholars.

When one feels the need to follow the religion in its totality, then naturally the first question that would crop up would be: what is this religion? And where will we find it? The answer to this question we find in the books is that: the religion is the way

of life which was brought by the Holy Prophet (pbuh). The Holy Prophet (pbuh) has affirmed that the scholars are the heirs to the religious knowledge. Therefore, we have to go to the scholars to know about the religion. The religious knowledge is available with them only.

As cloth is available with the clothier
Milk is available with the milkman
Groceries are available with the grocer
Fruits are available with the fruit vendor.

Wherever these things are available one has to go to their respective shops and get them. If one just keeps loitering in the market without approaching the shop, he would not get anything.

In the same way when we come out in the way of Allah and proclaim that

success lies in religion, and rightly so, and we also have the hunger to know about the religion, but if we do not go to the persons where religious knowledge is available, then how would we get it?

The founder of the Tableeghi movement, Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ilyas (RA) has prescribed many things in this regard. I quote a few from them here:

1. Every one who is a part of this tableeghi movement must bear this in his mind that the purpose behind coming out for dawah work is not just to teach or propagate religious knowledge to others, but it is also for self correction and acquiring of knowledge. Therefore one should be preoccupied in acquiring knowledge and remembrance of Allah. Without this the coming out in the way of Allah has no meaning. It is also to be borne in mind that the acquisition of knowledge and the preoccupation in the remembrance of Allah should be under the supervision and guidance of the elders. The

knowledge and the dhikr that the prophets of Allah acquired was under the guidance of Almighty Allah. The Holy Companions acquired their knowledge from the Holy Prophet (pbuh), under his watchful eyes. This way in every age, people have acquired knowledge from their elders, and perfected it under their supervision and guidance. In the same way we are also in need of guidance from our elders, otherwise there is a likelihood of the devil leading us astray. (Malfoozat Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ilyas (RA): compiled by Maulana Muhammad Manzoor Nauamani)

2. The dignity of the Muslim brethren and veneration of the scholars is fundamental to our mode of dawah work (tableeghi work). Every Muslim should be respected for his Islam and every scholar should be venerated for his knowledge of Islam.

He further said: I am really worried that the concept of knowledge and dhikr has not yet got registered with our preachers (tableeghi workers). The only way out to address this problem is to send them to the scholars, so that they do their tablighee work under the guidance of the scholars and also benefit from their companionship. [Malfoozat Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ilyas (RA): compiled by Maulana Manzoor Naumani (RA)]

3. Through this tableeghi movement, we want to bring together the scholars from different places and the common man and inculcate peace and harmony between them. Further, we also have as our foremost purpose, the development of love and affection, and cooperation and oneness among the different circles of the scholars. [(Malfoozat Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Ilyas (RA); compiled by Maulana Manzoor Naumani (RA)]

It is therefore necessary that we seek guidance form the

religious scholars in every department of our life, and follow. Whatever acts of worship we perform in the light of knowledge, will be correct. They will be in accordance with the Commandments of Almighty Allah, and in the manner laid down by the Holy Prophet (pbuh). And when the acts of worship are in accordance to the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), they will have refulgence which can be felt. This refulgence will lead us to the knowledge of God, discrimination between the true and the false, and protection from all tribulations.

CHECK UP ON THE REFULGENCE OF VIRTUES

Every virtue contains refulgence. When a man, in accordance to Shari'ah, performs a virtuous act, and doesn't spoil it by committing an evil act, then with the barakah of that virtuous act refulgence is created in his heart. What will be the brilliance of that refulgence is known only to Allah the Almighty. It will depend on the performance of Sunnah and supererogatory acts of worship along with the imperative and obligatory ones. More the performance of the former more will be the refulgence. And the refulgence of his acts of worship will make the man's life radiant.

If the acts of worship are in accordance with the Sunnah and Shari'ah, then its benefit will be more despite them being less in quantity. For example the light produced by a low wattage bulb which we call as 'zero bulb' is enough for us to complete many a piece of work. The minimum amount of refulgence of an act of worship is 10, which is enough to solve many an issue concerning this world and the next.

When the refulgence of the acts of worship accumulates, it helps in discriminating true from false. One starts feeling the harms of the evil acts and the barakah of the virtues.

Now we must stop for a while and think whether the virtues

which are rewarded 70 times over in the month of Ramadan are getting accumulated or not? If they are getting accumulated, then how much are they?

We must check up on the influence these virtues are registering on our heart?

Have we come to understand the harms of sinning?

With the accumulation of radiance in our heart and its blessings, are we able to appreciate the evil of lustful glances?

Have we understood the evil of back-biting and its harms?

When we check up on our actions, we must see whether, after having understood the harms of the evil acts, we abandoned those evil acts?

If we have not abandoned those bad deeds, but still do it, then be sure that the refulgence of the good deeds has got lost some where. It did not accumulate. Then the question is where did that refulgence go?

For example: we had just recited the Holy Qur'an sitting in the mosque, and its refulgence had accumulated. Then where did it go?

If we ponder over it we will realize that the devil and our psyche (nafs) have robbed that refulgence by making us commit some bad deed.

For example:

Lustful glances robbed the refulgence

The wrong use of tongue robbed it.

Or some ailment of the heart robbed it, like we had malice towards somebody that is still present in our heart. This robbed us of the refulgence of the good deeds.

Generally, a man is involved in inner vices, which he is not aware of, and therefore doesn't bother about its correction. He is under the illusion of his manifest religiosity, and therefore the refulgence of his good deeds goes a waste.

Therefore we must always be worried about and try to avoid

both the manifest as well as the internal vices. When we look at others' faults and

shortcomings, we commit such sins that we don't even think of repenting them. For example, our neighbour who is apparently healthy doesn't observe fast. If we look down up on him for his not fasting, in fact we are also committing something unlawful. But remember that there is a difference between the two unlawful acts. Your neighbour might be feeling remorse in his heart that despite being able to fast he is not fasting. This feeling of remorse in him may one day urge him to fast.

And the sin committed by you is such that you don't even think that you have committed any wrong. Therefore you don't even have the urge to repent. This is the reason that

Despite listening to so much recitation of Qur'an in the taraveeh

Despite reading so much Qur'an sitting in the mosque

Despite so much of dhikr (remembrance of Allah)

Despite so much charity

Despite so much of good saying and listening

There is no good effect on our hearts. Each one of us knows his condition better.

You check your heart

We will check ours to see despite performing so many good deeds, why is their refulgence not getting accumulated in our hearts? If we do not do good deeds just for the sake of doing them, but do them in order to receive their reward, then we must check up on our acts and their resultant refulgence. Our nature is such that we take care to do good deeds, but do not bother to keep away from bad ones. That is the reason we have not been able to perfectly connect with Almighty Allah till now. In fact we never tried to achieve it. If we try we will find Almighty Allah. Almighty Allah has promised that if we try

we can get connected with Him (swt) in the month of Ramadan. Obviously, He (swt) is ready to give, there is nobody to take.

ہم تو مائل بہ کرم ہیں کوئی سائل ہی نہیں
راہ دکھلائیں کسے، رہروِ منزل ہی نہیں

Translation: 'we are ready to give our largesse, but there is no seeker. Whom shall we show the right path, there is no one seeking to reach the destination.'

The reward for the other acts of worship is given through the angels, but the reward for the fast is given directly by Almighty Allah. Therefore, one should repent his manifest as well as internal sins in Ramadan ul Mubarak, and make sure to do as many virtuous acts as possible and thus try to establish perfect connection with Almighty Allah.

A FEW ACTS OF WORSHIP FOR RAMADAN

Now I would like to mention a few acts of worship which are to be particularly performed in the month of Ramadan.

1. One should take care to observe fasts and offer Taraveeh prayers with regularity with full fervour and enthusiasm. If it were not for these acts of worship, the blessed moments of Ramadan would have been whiled away in negligence.
2. One should take care to perform prayers in the mosque in congregation, and should be present well in time to avoid missing to join the prayers from very beginning (takbeer e oola). Especially at the time of leaving the fast (iftaar), it is seen that many a time we miss the congregation or at least miss the beginning of the prayer owing to reaching late to the mosque. One should try to avoid this practice.
3. One should as many times as possible invoke the article of faith and Darood, and do repentance and ask forgiveness from Almighty Allah. and do frequent supplications.

4. One should particularly make sure to read the Holy Qur'an and should also recite it as much as possible in the supererogatory prayers. One should note that if he recites the Holy Qur'an standing in prayers he gets 100 virtues for each letter, and if he reads it sitting, he gets 50 virtues per letter.

5. In the state of fasting, one should completely avoid all the sins-especially one should abstain from telling lies. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said:" Almighty Allah does not need the starvation of a man who doesn't avoid telling lies and acting on it."

6. One must guard his gaze, and his tongue. One is required to protect his fast from the sins of heart and mind.

As we keep away from eating and drinking during fasting, we must also keep away from sinning. Although the fast we observe avoiding eating and drinking ends with iftaar, and eating and drinking becomes lawful after that, the fast of keeping away from sinning doesn't end even with iftaar, and never is it lawful-neither in Ramadan nor in other months. When we shun eating and drinking, which have been made temporarily unlawful, then we must also shun sinning which has been made permanently unlawful.

7. In this sacred month, one should try to surpass the other in achieving Almighty Allah's forgiveness and Mercy. In fact Almighty Allah has commanded so, and wants to see His servants competing with each other in doing good deeds.

8. One should finish off his household chores and shopping needs, and spend as much time as possible in the mosque. Because

یہ لمحے زندگی میں بار بار آیا نہیں کرتے

Translation:' such moments do not come often in one's life.'

9. If one can arrange to spend the month of Ramadan in the company of righteous people, then he will find it easier to follow the above mentioned suggestions.

10. One should reduce the burden of work on his servants and subordinates.

11. Showing kindness to the neighbours and the poor and the needy is a recommended act of this sacred month. It is narrated in a Hadeeth that during this sacred month, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) used to be more generous and His (pbuh) generosity became phenomenal.

12. One should let poor person join the iftaar spread. One should also help the needy financially.

13. One should supplicate Almighty Allah for the bestowal of piety, protection of faith and acts of worship, exaltation of Islam, protection of religious institutions, and help and support for the oppressed Muslims.

PROVE ONE'S PIETY THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Friends! During the full month of Ramadan, we keep away from certain things from morning till evening in compliance to the edict of Almighty Allah, though these things are otherwise lawful, permissible and are basic needs of life. But because Almighty Allah commanded us to shun them during fasting we obediently made them unlawful for us.

Through this act of obedience to Almighty Allah, we prove that we are not slaves of our psyche (nafs) and desires, but we are the slaves of Almighty Allah. Once we proved this point it becomes necessary for us not to let the purpose behind fasting die after the end of Ramadan, but continue to follow it up through out the year.

Almighty Allah said that the purpose behind making fast an imperative duty is to help the believer achieve piety. Obviously achieving piety is not for a month's sake, but for the whole year and for the entire life. None of us knows whether or

not he will live to get this sacred month the next year. Therefore one should not lose the purpose behind fasting. After Ramadan, the devil and our psyche (nafs) will try their best to spoil the refulgence of the virtues earned during this month, and also make us forget the purpose of achieving piety. But if we show courage and boldness then Almighty Allah's help will be with us.

REMOVAL OF A FEW DOUBTS

Some people feel that it is against piety to make use of the concession offered by the Shari'ah, or to benefit from the permissible things. In their opinion, to tread the difficult path is what is demanded by piety and is its real beauty.

This is not correct.

Once the Holy Prophet (pbuh) did some act, but later discharged others from doing it. Some people refrained from making use of that concession. When the Holy Prophet (pbuh came to know about it he called them and addressed:

After glorifying Almighty Allah He (pbuh) said:" what has happened to some people that they refrain from doing what I do. By Allah, I know Allah more than them; I fear Allah and adopt piety more than them.." (Bukhari: kitab ul adab)

One should also understand that piety does not mean that a pious man never commits a mistake. A pious person may also commit mistake, but he does not stay at it. If he commits any disobedience of Almighty Allah, he will immediately repent and beseech and implore Almighty Allah to forgive him

And thus again achieves the proximity of Allah. And because of repentance and seeking forgiveness, he becomes eligible for Almighty Allah's favours. Therefore, Hakeem ul Ummat Hazrat Thanwi (RA) says:" remaining pious is as easy as staying with ablution (wudu).' If the wudu is broken then the man can do it again and become ba-wudu (with ablution). In

the same way if the man has committed any sin he can seek Almighty Allah's forgiveness and become pious again. When one feels remorseful of one's mistakes he remains within the circle of piety.

THE LAST WORD-AN IMPORTANT SUBMISSION

After describing the Paradise in detail, Almighty Allah informs the believers that this Paradise has been created for the pious people. And Almighty Allah has bestowed on the believers the month of Ramadan for them to become pious.

Now we have to check up on ourselves and see whether we have achieved piety. If not, then which period of time would be better suited to achieve piety than the month of Ramadan? Therefore one should show respect to this month. Almighty Allah has bestowed up on us this sacred month in which it is easier to reform ourselves and achieve piety. We do not know whether we will get this golden opportunity again in our lives or not. Therefore it is sensible not to waste these valuable days in negligence. If we spend this month without benefiting from it, then its bad effect will remain with us through out the year. Therefore if we do a little struggle in controlling our psyche (nafs) and show a little courage, and strive to achieve piety in this month, then God willing the entire year will pass off in the state of piety.

Religious elders have said:

As the Friday is spent, the same way Saturday passes by

As the Ramadan is spent, the same way the year passes by.

As the Hajj is performed, the same way the entire life passes by.

Therefore one should welcome Ramadan with a etermination to spend it in such a way that the entire year will become good for us; we will achieve piety, and Almighty Allah will be pleased with us and will admit us into the Paradise.

In the end, I would like to share a few things with you which would help you in achieving piety and will be very useful for you in your life. I have benefited a lot from these things and I hope you will also benefit from them as you practice them. These are seven points which I shall mention briefly in the first and then describe them in detail later on.

SEVEN POINTS

1. One should keep reminding oneself that Almighty Allah is watching us.

If possible one should set an alarm in the cell phone to repeat every few minutes, which when 'beeps' would remind us that 'Allah is watching us.'

2. One should follow the Sunnah with the remembrance of the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

3 One should be careful in using his eyes.

4. One should be careful in using his tongue. One should not utter the things which do not benefit him.

5. One should regularly thank Almighty Allah for His (swt) favours

6. One should also regularly seek forgiveness from Almighty Allah.

7. One should fix a time for every thing, and should do that work at that time only.

Now let me describe these points in detail.

First point: One should always be conscious of the fact that Almighty Allah is watching him, and is with him. This consciousness will benefit him in two ways.

One: One will be involved deeply in worshiping. Because, when you are aware that Almighty Allah is watching you, then you will also feel that your total attention should be towards Almighty Allah. This way you will experience humility and fear of God. When you perform prayer with this

consciousness, you will experience a totally different feeling. You will be aware that Almighty Allah is watching you stand in prayer; He is watching you do recitation in the prayer; He is watching you bow; He is watching you prostate; He is watching you sit; He is listening to your glorifying Him. When one is so much conscious of Almighty Allah watching him, then his humility and fear of God will increase and he will try to perform every act with due regard to Sunnah.

Almighty Allah has commanded us to perform all our prayers with such consciousness only. If one is conscious of Almighty Allah watching him in the state of prayers, he will also have that consciousness in other moments of life. This will result in his abandoning the sins and forbidden things. But it is sad to note that when we do not have that consciousness in our prayers, how we can expect it to be there in other things of life. This is the very reason that despite offering prayers regularly, we do not abandon the forbidden things.

Two: The second benefit of this consciousness is that one will save himself from sinning. Due to the dominance of this consciousness, he is aware that his Lord is watching him, and is with him. Then how can he commit sins? Therefore, this consciousness will stop him from committing sins. One is inclined towards committing sins when he knows that no body is watching him, and thus his sin will go unnoticed. This would encourage him to commit sins.

Every Muslim knows this fact very well that Almighty Allah is omnipresent and watching. He (swt) is aware of each of our actions, and is capable of punishing us immediately on our committing the sins. But generally the man is not conscious of this while committing sins.

Therefore, if this consciousness is dominant in somebody then he will develop a certain fear of God, and would feel:' when God is watching me how can I commit this sin'. So he

does not have the courage to commit any sin. In short, on account of this consciousness, on the one hand the man feels humility and fear of God in his prayers, and on the other hand, finds it easier to refrain from committing sins.

Second point: One should follow the Sunnah along with the remembrance of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). There are two things here. One is that we have been shown the Sunnah way of doing certain thing by somebody and we start doing it that way. And the second one is to be always on the look out for the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (pbuh), and before doing anything, first find out what is the Sunnah way of doing it. There is a big difference between these two.

Generally it so happens that we know the Sunnah way of doing a few acts and by doing them we are satisfied that we are implementing the Sunnah. The fact of the matter is that we do not even know about many Sunnah acts. We should not therefore be contented with the observance of a few acts of Sunnah. We should in fact be on the look out for finding out the Sunnah way of doing each and every activity of our daily life, and also learn the different supplication that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) used to invoke in different times of the day, and try to observe them. In this connection the reading of the following few books will be of benefit:

Uswa e Rasool e Akram SAW, Ad dua ul masnoon, Hisn e Haseen, Amal ul Youm wal lailah, Shimaail e Kubra, Musnoon DuaaeN.

The correct way to read these books is to first mark the topics in the list of contents which we encounter every day. Then you must go through those topics in detail and then implement those acts and the invocations in your daily lives. In this connection another thing to be remembered is that while finding out the Sunnah way of doing all our daily activities, we should also make it a point to follow the Sunnah along with the

remembrance of the Holy Prophet (pbuh): the Holy Prophet (pbuh) did this act in this way that is why I am also doing it in this way; the Holy Prophet (pbuh) invoked this supplication on this occasion, so I am also invoking this supplication on this occasion.

Friends! We commit a mistake in this regard. Though we observe the Sunnah way of doing things, we do it without remembrance of the Holy Prophet (pbuh). As a result, though we do the things in the Sunnah way, we do them without the required devotion. Gradually it becomes mechanical, and the desire to follow the Holy Sunnah vanishes. Therefore it is necessary that while doing any Sunnah act, one should remember the Holy Prophet (pbuh). When we start doing this way, God willing the benefits of observing the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (pbuh) will reflect in our lives-our face will have the refulgence of virtuousity ; we will get the reward on our acts of worship; we will receive love and respect of Almighty Allah and the fellow humans.

Third point: One should be careful in using his eyes. Muslims have been commanded in the Holy Qur'an to lower their gaze. Therefore one should first learn to walk with lowered gaze. When a man starts walking with lowered gaze, he will be protected from looking at things that are forbidden.

Before raising one's gaze, one should decide what he wants to see and why he has to see that, and once the purpose of seeing is served; he should again lower his gaze. If a person's glance unintentionally falls upon a non-mahram woman, he must avert his gaze immediately, by first shutting his eyelids and then turning his face away. The shutting of eyelids should be so fast that his glance should not stay long enough on the face of the non-mahram to appreciate her beauty. In today's world, on the roads you come across non-mahram un-veiled

women at every step. By following the above mentioned method, God willing it will be easier for one to save him self from casting his glances at forbidden things.

Fourth point: One should guard one's tongue. Wrong use of tongue would destroy the virtues. The tongue, though a small organ, commits very grave sins, such as lying, back-biting, slander, abusing others without reason, uttering improper words in anger, talking absurdities etc. Therefore one should use it very carefully.

Leaving aside other sins committed by the tongue, if we consider absurdities alone we will know how grave a sin it is. It is narrated in a Prophetic saying that absurd talk eats up the virtues in the same way as fire burns up the dry wood. In the light of this Prophetic saying, if we check up on ourselves, we will find that due to the fear of Almighty Allah, we, who are considered religious in the society, may be desisting from sins like lying, back-biting and slander, but the disease of talking absurdities is so common that even the religious section of the society is not spared of it-save what God wills. They squander their virtues via talking absurdities. Therefore it is necessary that we should first apply brakes to it. The easy way to do that is to first weigh what we want to talk and see whether it is essential to say it. Or is there any harm in not saying it. If there is harm in not saying certain thing then it must be said, but if there is no harm in not saying it, then it is better to keep silent. In fact this is the standard of necessary conversation. There are two types of benefits from it.

Firstly, a man would save a lot of time by not indulging in useless talk, which otherwise he can use in acts of Allah's obedience.

Secondly, when the man desists from talking absurdities, he will also protect his tongue from other sins of the tongue.

Fifth point: One must thank Almighty Allah for his favours

every now and then.

Being ungrateful is also a disease, which has become very common these days. On meeting somebody, when we ask about his well-being, the first thing he would do is lament about his difficulties and hardships. He may complain of head ache. Though all of his other faculties are perfectly alright he will not be thankful for them, but for minor head ache he will complain and show his ungratefulness.

An elderly person once came to me and asked about my well-being. He knew that I was not keeping good health. When he asked me about my well-being I immediately started listing my difficulties, which took about three minutes. After that I told that elderly man: 'Hazrat! Out of the total number of minutes in a 24 hour day, I have difficulties of only 3 minutes, Rest of the time it is comfortable.'

Similarly, an elderly person fell down while walking on the road and broke two teeth. He immediately got up and started thanking. People around asked him how it is that despite breaking his two teeth he is thanking? The elderly man said: 'I am thankful because out of 32 teeth my 30 teeth are intact, only two teeth have broken.'

Similarly, some ash fell down on an elderly person while he was walking on the road. He immediately dusted off the ash and thanked. People asked him:' Hazrat! Your clothes got soiled due to the ash and you are thanking.' The elderly man replied: 'due to my mis-deeds I was deserving of fire, whereas only ash has been thrown on me. Is it not something to be thankful about?'

The purpose behind narrating these incidents is that instead of being ungrateful for the missing favours, we should learn to be thankful for the existing blessings, because to be content with what destiny offers us is also a part of our faith. By being ungrateful for the non-existent favours, we are not helping

ourselves in any way. So it is better to adopt the habit of being thankful in all circumstances. The easy way to do it is to thank Almighty Allah for the blessings he has endowed us with by saying …

اَللّٰهُمَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ وَلَكَ الشُّكْرُ

'O Lord! Despite my being un-deserving of these blessings you have bestowed up on me all these favours. I am thoroughly sinful and disobedient, but despite that you have bestowed on me so many comforts and blessings, due to your mercy and benevolence.' If you think this way then you will be inclined towards being thankful rather than being ungrateful.

Sixth Point: One must seek Almighty Allah's forgiveness every now and then. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) who is pardoned of all sins, used to seek forgiveness from Almighty Allah 70 times a day.

Hazrat Abdullah bin Umar (RAA) says that he has heard the Holy Prophet (pbuh) invoke

"اَسْتَغْفِرُ اللّٰهَ الَّذِیْ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا هُوَ الْحَیُّ الْقَیُّوْمُ وَاَتُوْبُ اِلَیْهِ

a hundred times in one sitting. (Nasai)

While seeking forgiveness it is necessary for one to feel true repentance at one's sins from the depth of his heart.

Some righteous elders have observed that if there is no conscious feeling of remorse while seeking forgiveness, then one should seek Almighty Allah's forgiveness for such deficiency in one's act.

Two points can be deduced from this. The first one is that the man should always admit his mistakes and shortcomings to Almighty Allah. Secondly, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) has taught us to seek forgiveness of Almighty Allah frequently.

There are many benefits of seeking forgiveness.

The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said:" the one who seeks forgiveness is like the one who has never committed the sin."

If a man seeks forgiveness of Almighty Allah, all his minor

and major sins are pardoned.

Almighty Allah will forgive the sins of those who do true repentance, and will enter them in to the Paradise underneath which rivers flow. (surat tu Tahreem)

The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said that one gets rid of grief and troubles by seeking forgiveness and doing repentance, and Almighty Allah provides him subsistence from such sources which he never imagined.

Almighty Allah turns the sins of a man into virtues who seeks forgiveness.(Al Furqaan)

Almighty Allah causes rains, gives wealth and children and orchards for those who repent and seek forgiveness.(Al Nooh)

Hazrat Ayesha (RAA) says that the Holy Prophet (pbuh) used to recite these words quite often before his death:

سُبْحَانَ اللهِ وَبِحَمْدِهٖ أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللهَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَيْهِ۔ (بخاری و مسلم)

The Holy Prophet (pbuh) says that Almighty Allah stretches His (swt) hands in the night seeking to forgive the ones, who commited sins in the day, and stretches His (swt) hands in the day seeking to forgive the ones who commited sins in the night. (Muslim).

Almighty Allah sends down his bounties on seeking forgiveness. (An Namal)

The Holy Prophet (pbuh) said:" the one who recites:

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللهَ الَّذِی لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَیُّ الْقَیُّوْمَ وَأَتُوبُ إِلَیْهِ

Would get his sins pardoned, even if he had committed the grave sin of running away from taking part in jihad." (Bukhari and Muslim)

Seventh point: One should make it a habit to work with a fixed time table. The one who doesn't respect time, and does work without a time table, can not accomplish anything-

neither worldly nor religious. And he will always feel occupied despite not doing anything.

The prosperity in this world and the Hereafter depends on how best one makes use of his time. Whatever field of activity you may take, unless the man works according to a time table, and makes use of his time in the best way possible, he will not prosper.

Take the example of Hazrat Thanwi (RA), who authored hundreds of books. It is difficult for us to read all those books. Not that Hazrat Thanwi (RA) did not have anything to do other than writing books, he had other activities too which were accomplished in their respective times. He used to give discourses; he used to have sittings with his disciples, he replied to the letters, and he also traveled. In short, all these tasks were carried out in their respective times according to a fixed time table. Respecting time and working according to a fixed time table had become his second nature. He didn't tolerate going against it. This routine was not restricted for two or four years, but it remained a routine for sixty years of his life. His works have remained a beacon of guidance for the future generations. His steadfastness was not less than a miracle. It was the barakah of this steadfastness that Almighty Allah extracted such a monumental work from him, that no body else could manage to do such a thing in the recent past. It is not that Almighty Allah rewarded only him, or the earlier people, because of their respecting the time and working according to a time table, but even today if some body works with such discipline He (swt) will accord prosperity in his work.

THE SIGN OF PIETY

Faqih Abul Lays Samarqhandi (RA) says that the sign of piety is that one should make the following 10 points compulsory on him:

1. One should keep his tongue clean from back-biting.
2. One should avoid suspicion.
3. One should abstain from mocking and making fun of others
4. One should guard his gaze and avoid seeing forbidden things.
5. One should speak only the truth.
6. One should be conscious of the favours of Almighty Allah.
7. One should spend his wealth for the correct purpose, and should not spend it on impermissible things.
8. One should not indulge in conceit and feeling of superiority.
9. One should offer five time prayers(Namaz/ Salah) within their prescribed times with due regard to their etiquette.
10. One should firmly stick to the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet and his Companions.